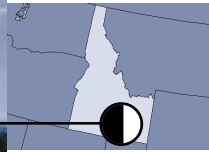


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## Recreation Vital to River's Future



*Faced with mounting land development pressure and loved by an adoring public, the Middle Snake River needed help to protect what made it special: its spectacular recreation resources.*

### A Big-Scale Approach

When Mike Pepper and the Middle Snake River Recreation Work Group sought to protect the recreation resources of the Middle Snake River, they thought expansively and looked at the whole 120-mile stretch of the river.

This big-scale approach was important given the Snake River corridor's popularity and the resulting pressure to develop land along the river and on top of its spectacular canyon rim. The corridor is home to three-quarters of Idaho's residents and attracts over two million visitors - mostly anglers and boaters who annually spend \$100 million in South Central Idaho's economy.

The Work Group formed in 1995 to chart a course for the river's future after a proposed sale of Bureau of Land Management property threatened to forever change the river corridor's character. Recognizing that recreation had always been (and would always be) integral to life in the corridor, the Work Group sought to develop a recreation management plan and turned to the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (Rivers & Trails) program of the National Park Service for help.

### Reaching Out to Develop a Recreation Plan

Rivers & Trails recommended that the Work Group diversify its membership to include citizens and land managers who

represented the communities and resources throughout the corridor, an important step in developing a plan for the entire 120-mile stretch of river. Rivers & Trails helped the Work Group collect data and facilitate public workshops to collect ideas about what should be done to enhance the river's recreation resources. The resulting plan, *Recreation Opportunities at Risk: An Action Plan for Managing Recreation in the Middle Snake River Corridor*, made over 100 recommendations to enhance 113 recreation sites, proposed a system of trails, recommended improved comprehensive planning, and promoted education about the river's resources.

### Action

It didn't take long for local governments and landowners to put the Work Group's plan in motion. *Ride the Great Rift*, an interactive learning kit, was added to 4th grade history programs, and a new 7-mile trail opened to connect Hagerman Fossil Beds National Monument with a regional trail system. With the plan to guide them, Pepper's and the Work Group's ultimate goal is within reach: enhancement and lasting protection of the incredible recreation resources on the Middle Snake River, and a strong conservation ethic among South Central Idaho's residents.

### For More Information

Contact Sue Abbott or Michael Linde of the National Park Service's Rivers & Trails program at (206) 220-4116 or [sue\\_abbott@nps.gov](mailto:sue_abbott@nps.gov) or (206) 220-4113 or [michael\\_linde@nps.gov](mailto:michael_linde@nps.gov).

### Keys to Success

- Forming an **inclusive work group** representing key stakeholders and citizens interested in the river corridor.
- Strong leadership** of Mike Pepper, chair of the Middle Snake River Recreation Work Group.
- Collecting resident's ideas** and sharing information at community workshops.
- Publishing *Recreation Opportunities at Risk: An Action Plan for Managing Recreation in the Middle Snake River Corridor*.**



**recreation management plan** -- a plan of action for managing the recreation resources within a corridor or parcel of land.



diversifying membership

Bureau of Land Management  
Citizen Advocates  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation  
Idaho Power Company  
Idaho Rivers United  
Idaho Wildlife Federation  
Jerome Recreation District  
National Park Service  
National Resource Conservation Service  
Twin Falls Parks and Recreation Department

## Focus on River Recreation



"Thanks to Rivers & Trails, the recreation management plan we developed is a high quality tool which truly represents the vision of the Work Group and the public. We couldn't have done it without them."

Mike Pepper, Chair, Recreation Work Group

Federal and state agencies and private interests form a Recreation Forum to look at recreation in South Central Idaho and the Snake River corridor, including river access.

1990

1994

Mike Pepper and others express concern for the impact on recreation when landowner proposes to sell property along the river.

Middle Snake River Recreation Work Group forms and asks National Park Service for help in developing recreation plan.

1995

Work Group publishes plan, Recreation Opportunities at Risk: An Action Plan for Managing Recreation in the Middle Snake River Corridor.

1997

1999

An interactive learning kit, the first product to support the plan, is incorporated into elementary school curriculums.

A 7-mile trail, the second product to support the plan, connects Hagerman Fossil Bed National Monument with a regional trail system.

2000

## What the Future Holds for the Middle Snake River

The Work Group continues to build momentum for the plan's implementation, and awareness of the river's resources. Jerome and Twin Falls Counties and Idaho Power have adopted parts of the plan. Two new groups -- Friends of the Snake River and the Southern Idaho Land Trust -- are organizing to add public access points called for in the plan. Regional information is now being shared among local visitor centers. A sign plan and boater's map are planned to advertise recreation sites and access points.

## Help From the National Park Service

Diversifying membership. Facilitating public workshops. Collecting data. Guiding development of a recreation management plan. In these ways over the course of two years, the National Park Service contributed to the Middle Snake River Recreation Work Group's five-year-long effort to protect the recreation resources of the Middle Snake River. This is one example of how the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program works. It provides short-term staff assistance to local groups to help them solve the problems they face when protecting their community's important resources. If you think the National Park Service could help your group, contact Michael Linde, Program Leader, Rivers & Trails, 909 First Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104 or (206) 220-4113 or visit [www.ncrc.nps.gov/rtca](http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/rtca).

